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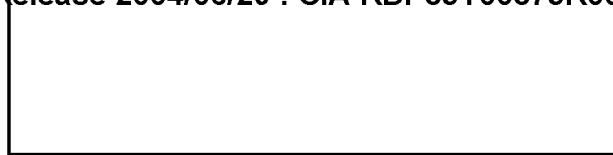
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Cease-Fire Developments

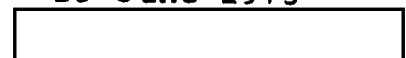
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Cease-Fire Developments

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SOUTH VIETNAMSome Fighting Still Goes On

Early fragmentary reporting indicates that fighting has continued in some areas of South Vietnam since the beginning of the "new" cease-fire, most notably in Kontum Province in the highlands and Chuong Thien in the delta. It is not yet clear whether this is new action or a spillover from earlier activity. Saigon is claiming numerous Communist violations, but is also continuing several "clearing" operations.

Initial reaction from South Vietnamese officials was predictable. Most are skeptical of Communist intentions to abide by the agreement. The Binh Thuan Province chief for example, said the cease-fire conditions, including the reversion to the January positions, are "confusing," adding that "in Vietnam, we say that if you put the frog in the dish, he jumps out." [REDACTED]

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Concern for Chuong Thien

South Vietnam's regional commander in the delta, General Nghi, is reinforcing his troops in Chuong Thien Province, where Communist forces are a growing threat. He is reported to have ordered each of the other delta provinces to detail at least one territorial force battalion to Chuong Thien to prevent the Communists from seizing the entire province. One province, Phong Dinh, has already sent four battalions. During the past few weeks, the government dispatched three Ranger battalions, a regiment of the 9th Division, and reportedly Marines from the Saigon area to Chuong Thien. The province has been the responsibility of the 21st Division, which recently underwent a change of commanders intended to make it more effective.

Arrayed against government forces in Chuong Thien are four North Vietnamese infantry regiments, two artillery battalions, two sapper battalions,

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and about 2,000 local force troops and guerrillas. The Communists have been gradually expanding their holdings in Chuong Thien and now control most of the province outside of the provincial capital and the district headquarters. Saigon has been slow to react to the increasing threat in this strategically located province. The reinforcements may arrive too late to regain many areas that have fallen under Communist control but may inhibit further incursions. [REDACTED]

PRG Lowering Sights

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The PRG has resigned itself to a gradual process of normalizing relations with the Saigon government. Madame Phan Thi Minh, a PRG delegate to the bilateral talks, claimed in a recent conversation [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] that the PRG had "to some extent modified its original goal of politically dominating the South." She attributed the PRG's reassessment to its own growing maturity and advice from Hanoi. She asserted that under the current circumstances the PRG hoped only to achieve "simple recognition" of its legal existence and proportional representation in a future government.

Madame Minh's comments are probably tailored to some extent to the exile audience. The PRG, as well as Hanoi, has gone to some lengths recently to put a moderate and reasonable face on its goals and policies--particularly in discussions with potential "third force" members in Paris. There is little doubt, however, that the hard realities of the current political and military situation in the South have indeed compelled the PRG to downgrade its hopes for any rapid or complete domination of the South. [REDACTED]

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CAMBODIAThe Military Situation

There was little significant activity in the Route 4 area west of Phnom Penh on 16 June as government forces rested in preparation for a new attempt to clear the highway. The Khmer Communists, meanwhile, are still carrying out light harassing attacks against government positions along Routes 2 and 3 southwest of the capital. Farther south along Route 2, government forces attempted to retake a small outpost a few miles south of Takeo on 14 June, but were repulsed. Communist forces subsequently launched several attacks against government defensive positions around the city. They continued to harass government troops around Baram and Neak Lung, Southeast of Phnom Penh. [REDACTED]

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LAOSMilitary Situation

The level of military activity continues to decline with only 15 minor incidents reported this week. Most action was in the major rice growing area south of Muong Phalane in the central panhandle.

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Hanoi's Excuse for Staying?

A Lao Communist delegation in Hanoi on 14 June signed an agreement to continue "non-refund aid from the North Vietnamese government to Laos." According to Radio Hanoi, the agreement provides for "surveys and construction of semi-durable projects servicing the finance and food branch." Last month another Pathet Lao delegation in Hanoi signed an "assistance" agreement for transport, roads, and bridge construction.

These agreements may be designed in part to provide a cloak of legitimacy for a diminished North Vietnamese presence in Laos.

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